

China-based biotech startup Laekna teams up with Eli Lilly to develop obesity treatment

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To accelerate the global development of LAE102, for muscle-preserving weight loss in obesity



Laekna, Inc., a China-based biotech company focused on novel drug development for metabolic and cancer diseases, has announced a clinical collaboration with Eli Lilly and Company, a global leader in cardiometabolic health, including diabetes and obesity, to accelerate the development of LAE102, a novel ActRIIA monoclonal antibody (*mAb*) as a novel treatment for obesity. Accelerating innovative treatments like this hopefully can make a meaningful impact on the obesity epidemic and the lives of millions of people affected by obesity.

Key highlights of the collaboration include:

- Clinical development of LAE102 through phase 1 study including obese patients
- Lilly will fund, share resources and expertise to accelerate research and development timelines
- Laekna retains global rights for LAE102

The collaboration will focus on the development and clinical evaluation of LAE102, an innovative ActRIIA antagonistic mAb that may have potential as a first-in-class therapy in this disease area. ActRIIA is a receptor that has been shown to play a critical role in muscle regeneration and lipid metabolism. LAE102 has been shown to both increase lean mass and decrease fat mass in pre-clinical models. If successful, LAE102 could, in combination with a GLP1R agonist, further reduce fat mass and significantly regain the lean mass loss induced by GLP1R agonist. This positions LAE102 as a promising complementary drug candidate for achieving quality weight control.

By combining Laekna's novel approach with Lilly's decades-long experience in metabolic diseases, the partnership aims to significantly advance the standard of care in obesity management.